

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

SPRING.

Mild spring returns the earth to cheer.
Dispelling wintry storms and gloom—
The resurrection of the year,
And wakes it from its icy tomb,
All nature hails its loveliness—
The birds are singing in the sky—
The fields put on their Sabbath dress,
And balmy zephyrs wander by.

Yes—Spring returns—but not to all—
For many bosoms inly mourn;
It hath no power to recall
That which can never more return;—
Nor what avails its brightest gem,
To hearts broke down with canker'd grief?
It cannot yield delight to them,
Nor give their bosoms kind relief.

For there's a winter of the heart,
Which Spring can never chase away,
To which no sunbeam can impart
A genial warmth with gladd'ning ray;
It is when those we loved have gone,
Like tendrils nipp'd in early age,
Have left us desolate and lone,
And life a wintry hermitage.

The Spring last year pass'd brightly on,
And Mary pluck'd its choicest flowers—
The Spring returns—but she is gone—
Her angel smile no more is ours.
I saw the mourners by her bier—
I heard her funeral requiem sung—
I shed the tributary tear,
Since on its stem the rose—bud hung.

And many eyes which now are bright,
In which the fire of fancy burns,
May haply be deprived of light
Ere Spring again to them returns;
Yes—many a heart that now is glad,
And fondly to some idol cleaves,
May be disconsolate and sad,
Ere Spring again resumes its leaves.

THE CURSE OF GOLD.

A DREAM.

MORDANT Lindsay threw off the long black scrape-scarf and hatband which, in the character of chief mourner, he had that day worn at the funeral of his wife, as he entered one of the apartments at Langford, and moodily sought a seat. The room was spacious, and filled with every luxury which wealth could procure or ingenuity invent to add to its comfort or its ornament. Pictures, mirrors, silken curtains, and warm carpets; statues in marble and bronze were scattered about in rich profusion in the saloon, and its owner, in the deep mourning of a widower, sat there—grieving truly—thinking deeply; but not, as might have been supposed, of the lady who had that day been laid in the vault of his ancestors—no, he was regretting the loss of a much brighter spirit than ever lived in her pale proud face, or in the coldness of her calm blue eye. Mordant Lindsay was apparently a man of past fifty; his hair was streaked with gray, though his dark locks still curled thickly round his head; he bore on his face the marks of more than common beauty, but time had left its traces there, in the furrows on his brow; and even more deeply than time, care. As a young man, he had been very handsome, richly endowed by nature with all those graces which too often make captive only to kill; but fortune, less generous, had gifted him but with the heritage of a good name—nothing more—and his early life had been passed in an attempt by his own means, to remedy the slight she had put upon him at his birth. The object of his ambition was gained—had been now for some years: he was wealthy, the possessor of all the fair lands stretched out before him as far as his eye could reach, and a rent-roll not unworthy of one in a higher station in life; looked up to by the poor of Langford as the lord of the manor, courted by his equals as a man of some consequence. Was he happy? See the lines so deeply marked on his countenance, and listen to the sigh which seems to break from the bottom of his heart. You will find in them an answer.

How brightly the sun shines in through the windows of the room, gilding all around with its own radiance, and giving life and light to the very statues! It shines even on his head, but fails in warming his bosom; it annoys him, un congenial as it is with his sad thoughts, and he rises and pulls down the blind, and then restlessly wanders forth into the open air. The day is close, for summer is still at its height, and Mordant Lindsay seeks the shade of a group of trees and lies down, and presently he sleeps, and the sun (as it declines) throws its shadows on nearer objects; and now it rests on him, and as it hovers there, takes the form of that companion of his childhood, who for long, with a pertinacity he could not account for, seemed ever avoiding his path, and flying from him when most anxiously pursued; and he sees again those scenes of his past life before him dimly pictured through the vista of many years, and his dream ran thus:

He is a child at play, young and innocent, as

yet untainted by worldly ambition, and standing by him is a beautiful figure, with long golden hair, very bright, and shining like spun glass or the rays of the summer sun. Her eyes seem born for laughter, so clear, so mirthful, so full of joy, and her spotless robe flows around her, making everything it comes in contact with graceful as itself; and she has wings, for Happiness is fickle and flies away, as soon as man proves false to himself and unworthy of her. She joins the child in his gambols, and hand in hand with him sports beside him, gathering the same flowers that he gathers, looking through his smiling eyes as she echoes his happy laughter; and then, over meadow, past ditches, and through tangled bushes, in full chase after a butterfly. In the eagerness of the spot he falls, and the gaudy insect (all unconscious of being the originator of so many conflicting hopes and fears) flutters onward in full enjoyment of the sun and the light, and soon it is too far off to renew the chase. Tears, like dewdrops, fill the child's eyes, and he looks around in vain for his companion of the day. The grass is not so green without her; even the bird's song is discordant, and, tired, he sadly wends his way toward home. 'Oh, dear mamma!' he exclaims! brightening up, as he sees his mother coming toward him, and running to her finds a ready sympathy in his disappointment as she clasps her boy to her bosom and dries his little tearful face, closely pressing him to a heart whose best hopes are centered in his well-being. Happiness is in her arms, and she feels her warm breath upon his cheek as she kisses and fondles him; and anon he is as cheerful as he was, for his playmate of the day now returned with his own good-humor, accompanies him for all the hours he will encourage her to remain; sometimes hiding within the purple flower of the scented violet, or nodding from beneath the yellow cups of the cowslip, as the breeze sends her laden with perfume back to him again. And in such childish play and innocent enjoyment time rolls on, until the child has reached his ninth year, and becomes the subject and lawful slave of all the rules in Murray's Grammar, and those who instil them into the youthful mind. And then the boy finds his early friend (although ready at all times to share his hours of relaxation) very shy and distant; when studies are difficult or lessons long, keeping away until the task is accomplished; but cricket and bat and ball invariably summer her, and then she is bright and kind as of yore, content to forget old quarrels in present enjoyment; and as Mordant dreamed, he sighed in his sleep, and the shadow of Happiness went still further off, as if frightened by his grief.

The picture changes: and now more than twenty years are past since the time when the boy first saw the light, and he is sitting in the room of a little cottage. The glass door leading to the garden is open, and the flowers come clustering in at the windows. The loveliness of the child has flown, it is true, but in its place a fond mother gazes on the form of a son whose every feature is calculated to inspire love. The short dark curls are parted from off his sunburnt forehead, and the bright hazel eyes (in which merriment predominates) glance quickly toward the door, as if expecting some one. The book he has been pretending to read lies idly on his lap, and bending his head upon his hand, his eyes half shut in the earnestness of his reverie, he does not hear the light footstep which presently comes stealing softly behind him. The new comer is a young and very pretty girl, with a pale Madonna-looking face, seriously thoughtful beyond her years. She may be seventeen or eighteen, not more. Her hands have been busy with the flowers in the garden, and now, as she comes up behind the youth, she plucks the leaves from off a rosebud, and drops them on his open book. A slight start, and a look upward, and then (his arms around her light form) he kisses her fondly and often. And Happiness clings about them, and nestles closely by their side, as if jealous of being separated from either, and they were happy in their young love. How happy! caring for nought besides, thinking of no future, but in each other, taking no account of time so long as they should be together, contented to receive the evils of life with the good, and to suffer side by side (if God willed it) sooner than be parted. They were engaged to be married. At present, neither possessed sufficient to live comfortably upon, and they must wait and hope; and she did hope, and was reconciled almost to his departure, which must soon take place, for he has been studying for a barrister, and will leave his mother's house to find a solitary home in a bachelor's chamber in London. Mordant saw himself (as he had been then) sitting with his first love in that old familiar place, her hand clasped in his, her fair hair falling around her, and veiling the face she hid upon his shoulder, and even more vividly still, the remembrance of that Happiness which had ever been attendant on them when the most trivial incidents of the day were turned into matters of importance, colored and embellished as they were by love. He saw himself in possession of the reality, which, alas! he had thrown away for the shadow of it, and he longed for the recovery of those past years which had been so unprofitably spent, in a vain attempt at regaining it. The girl still sat by him; they did

not seem to speak, and throughout that long summer afternoon still they sat, she pulling the flowers (so lately gathered) in pieces, and he playing with the ringlets of her hair. And now the door opens, and his mother enters, older by many years than when she last appeared to him, but still the same kind smile and earnest look of affection as she turns toward her son. Her hand is laid upon his arm (as he raises to meet her,) her soft voice utters his name coupled with endearment. 'Mordant, dearest, Edith and myself wish to walk, if you will accompany us.' 'Certainly,' is the reply, and the three went out, and the dreamer watched their fast receding forms down a shady lane, until a turn lost them to his sight, and the retrospective view had vanished, but quickly to be replaced by another.

Again he sees the same youth, this time impatiently walking down a close dismal room.—The furniture is smoke-dried and dusty, once red, now of dark ambiguous color. The sofa is of horsehair, shiung (almost white in places) from a constant friction. On the mantelpiece hangs a looking glass, the frame wrapped round with yellow gauze to protect it from dirt, and here and there a fly-catcher, suspended from the ceiling, annoys the inmate of the dusky room by its constant motion. It is a lodging-house, ready furnished, and the young man, who has not left his home many months, is not yet accustomed to the change, and he is wearied and unhappy. He has just been writing to Edith, and the thought of her causes him uneasiness; he is longing to be with her again. Restlessly he paces up and down the narrow chamber, unwilling to resume studies by the master of which he could alone hope to be with her again, until a knock at the hall door makes him pause and sit down; another knock (as if the visitor did not care to be kept waiting.)—Mordant knew what was coming; he remembered it all, and felt no surprise at seeing in his dream a friend (now long since dead) enter the apartment, with the exclamation of 'What, Lindsay! all alone? I had expected to find you out, I was so long knocking at your door. How are you, old fellow?' and Charles Vernon threw himself into a chair. 'We are all going to the play,' continued he, 'and a supper afterward. You know Leclercque?—he will be one of the party—will you come?' and Vernon waited for an answer. The one addressed replied in the affirmative, and Mordant saw (with a shudder) the same figure which had allured him on in pleasure to seek lost Happiness, now tempting the youth before him. The two were so like each other in outward appearance that he wondered not he too was deceived, and followed her with even more eagerness than he had ever done her more retiring sister. And then with that gay creature in mind, Mordant saw the young man led on from one place of amusement to another—from supper and wine to dice and a gambling table—until ruin stared him in the face, and that mind, which had once been pure and untarnished, was fast becoming defaced by a too close connection with vice.—Mordant was wiser now, and he saw how flimsy and unreal this figure of Pleasure appeared—how her gold was tinsel, and her laughter but the hollow echo of a forced merriment—unlike his own once possessed Happiness, whose treasures were those of a contented spirit—whose gayety proceeded from an innocent heart and untroubled conscience. Strange that he should have been so blinded, to her beauties, and so unmindful of the other's defects; but so it had been. Mordant sympathised with the young man as he watched him running headlong towards his own misery; but the scene continued before him—he had power to prevent it—and now the last stake is to be played. On the throw of the dice rests the ruin of the small property he has inherited from his father. It is lost, and he begged for the little he could call his own, and forth from the hell (in which he has been passing the night) rushes into the street. It wants but one stroke to complete the wreck of heart as well as of fortune, and that stroke is not long in coming. Miserable, he returned to his lodgings, and alone he thought of his position. He thought of Edith. 'Love in a cottage, even could I by my own means regain what I have lost. Pshaw! the thing is ridiculous. Without money there cannot be Happiness for her or for me.' A few months had sadly changed him, who before saw it only in her society. But now the Goddess of his fancy stands before him—her golden curls of the precious metal he covets—her eyes receiving their brightness from its luster, and in his heart a new feeling asserts superiority, and he wishes to be rich. With money to meet every want, he will command her presence—not sure for it; and Mordant remembered how, in pursuance of this ambition, gradually cooling toward her, he had at last broken off his engagement with Edith—how for some years, day and night had seen him toiling at his profession, ever with the same object in view, and how at last he had married a woman in every way what he desired; rich in gold and lands and worldly possessions, but poor in heart compared with Edith.

The crowd jostle each other to get a nearer view of the bride as she passes (leaning on her father's arm) from the carriage to the church door. The bridegroom is waiting for her, and now joins her, and they kneel side by side at

the altar. Mordant remembers his wedding day. He is not happy, notwithstanding the feeling of ungratified pride he experiences as he places the ring on the fair hand of the Lady Blanche. No emotion of a very deep kind tinges her cheek: she is calm and cold through out the ceremony. She admires Mordant Lindsay very much; he was of a good family, so was she; he was very handsome and young, and she past thirty. Matches more incongruous have been made, and with less apparent reason, and this needs no further explanation on her side. They are married now and about to leave the church. The young man turns as he passes out (amid the congratulations of his friends,) attracted by scarcely suppressed sobs; but the cloaked figure from whom they proceed does not move, and he recognizes her not.

It is Edith, and Mordant, as he gazes on the scene before him, sees Happiness standing afar off afraid to approach too near to any one of the party, but still keeping her eyes fixed on the pale young mourner at that bridal, who bowed down with grief, sat there until the clock warned her to go, as the doors were being closed.

The married pair (after a month spent abroad) settle down at Langford; and the husband—was he happy now? No not yet but expecting to be from day to day, hoping that time would alter for the better what was wanting to the happiness of this home; but time flew on, and regardless of his hopes, left him the same disappointed man that it found him—disappointed in his wife, in his expectations of children—feeling a void in his heart which money was inefficient to supply. The drama was drawing to a close; Mordant felt that the present time had arrived. His wife was dead, and he in possession of everything which had been hers, but still an anxious, unsatisfied mind, prevented all enjoyment of life; but yet one more scene, and this time Mordant was puzzled, for he did not recognize either the place or the actors.

On a bed on one side was stretched the figure of a young woman. Her features were so drawn and sharpened by illness, that he could not recall them to his mind, although he had an idea that he ought to know her face.—She was very pale, and the heat seemed to oppress her, for in a languid voice she begged the lady (who was sitting by her side) to open the window. She rose to do so, and then Mordant saw that the scenery beyond was not English, for hedges of myrtle and scarlet geranium grew around in profusion, and the odor of orange flowers came thickly into the chamber of the dying girl. Raising herself with difficulty, she called to her companion, and then said:

'I know I shall not now get better; I feel I am dying, and I am glad of it. My life has been a living death to me for some years.—When I am dead, I would wish to be buried in England—not here—not in this place, which has proved a grave to so many of my countrymen. Let me find my last resting place, dearest mother, at home, in our little churchyard.'

The lady wept as she promised her child to fulfil her last request, and Mordant saw that happiness had flown from the bed, around which she had been hovering for some minutes, straight up to heaven, to await there the spirit of the poor, broken-hearted girl, who was breathing her last under the clear and sunny sky of Madeira.

Mordant shuddered as he awoke, for he had been asleep for some time, and the evening was closing as he rose from the damp grass. It was to a lonely hearth that he returned, and during the long night which followed, as he thought of his dream and of an ill-spent life, he resolved to re-visit his early home, in the hope that amid old scenes he might bring back the days when he was happy. Was Edith still alive? He knew not. He had heard she had gone abroad; she might be there still. He did not confess it to himself, but it was Edith of whom he thought most; and it was the hope of again seeing her which induced him to take a long journey to the place where he had been born. The bells were ringing for some merry-making as Mordant Lindsay left his travelling carriage to walk up the one street of which the village of Bower's Giffield boasted. He must go through the church-yard to gain the new inn, and passing (by one of the inhabitant's directions) through the turnstile, he soon found himself amid the memorials of the dead. Mordant, as he pensively walked along, read the names of those whose virtues were recorded on their gravestones, and as he read, reflected. And now he stops, for it is a well-known name which attracts his attention, and as he parts the weeds which have grown high over that grave, he sees inscribed on the broken pillar which marks the spot. 'Edith Graham, who died at Madeira, aged 21.' And Mordant, as he looks, sinks down upon the grass, and sheds the first tears which for years have been wept by him, and in sorrow of heart, when too late, acknowledges that it is not money or gratified ambition which brings Happiness in this world, but a contented and cheerful mind; and from that lonely grave he leaves an altered man, and a better one.

A SENTIMENT.—The Ladies! May their virtue exceed the magnitude of their skirts, while their faults are still smaller than their bonnets.